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Forest Roads to Be Built

Vecherni Novini, Sofia, 4 Oct 1951

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-- Sofia, Vecherni Novini, 4 Oct 51

During the past portion of the current year, 15 mountain roads have already been completed for the national economy, while the remaining 50 roads will be finished before the end of this month.

The forests are a valuable national resource. There is no economic activity that is not directly or indirectly connected with the use of wood and its derivatives. The development of the national economy depends in large measure on the correct and rational exploitation of the forests. Here, however, the problem of transportation arises. Prior to 9 September 1944, there was a lack of well developed transport and the forests were worked crudely, and greedily destroyed. The entrepreneur-capitalists, thirsting for easy and quick gains, felled the trees near the settlements and the valleys; the bared and deeply furrowed hills throughout our mountains are the mute witnesses of this looting. The exploitation of distant forests was haphazard, and the transportation by horses and mules was most primitive. More than 100,000 cubic meters of wood decayed each year, because of inadequate transportation.

It was only after 9 September 1944, that the issue of the planned and rational exploitation of the forests, and their renovation and development, was placed on a correct basis. A transportation network had to be established for this purpose, which would penetrate the most remote corners of our mountains.

The forest service employs several kinds of transport: mountain roads, mountain railroads, mountain cables, water canals and mazuli (?).

The basic transportation system is provided by the mountain roads, which were intensively developed in the Rhodopi, Pirin,

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Strandja, Stara Planina mountains and others. Thanks to the efforts of the people's authorities and to the valuable assistance of the USSR, during the last 7 years alone 600 kilometers of stone-surfaced mountain roads, and 1,500 kilometers of new mountain roads have been completed. Compared to past construction, this is 1.5 times more than that completed between 1878 and 9 September 1944.

This year mountain roads are being built in the districts of Devinsko, Tetevensko, Smolensko, Razlojko, Kazanlushko, Kustendilsko, Samokovsko, etc., in general, wherever the best untapped forestry regions exist.

What are the requirements for a mountain road?

Mountain roads are made for automobile and ox cart transportation. The essential characteristics from which the serviceability and the maximum exploitation may be judged are: the roadbed, slope gradation, the radius of curvature, the width of the curves, the width of the road, and the maximum load for the bridges. The few roads built in the past are useless because of their faulty construction. They are only three meters wide; they have been unevenly levelled; and their slopes are excessive -- 15 percent in some places. They are now being retraced and corrected. The new roads built to the best specifications possible, are divided into three classes, depending on the width of the road: first -- 6 meters; second -- 5 meters; and third -- 4 meters. The first-class roads are built with a view of transporting more than 20,000 cubic meters of lumber annually. Those of the second class -- 8,000 to 20,000 cubic meters, and those of the third class -- 2,000 to 8,000 cubic meters. These improved roads have encouraged motor transportation, and, whereas 1 cubic meter of lumber hauled

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by oxcart cost 1,000 leva, the same volume, transported a distance of 30 kilometers by truck, now costs 900 leva. Through improved transportation, the annual yield of the forests is now exploited 100 percent, while in the past, barely 50 percent was used.

The importance of the mountain roads does not stop with this. These roads are the arteries connecting the mountain people with the general stream of economic, cultural, and public life of the country. These roads are traveled today by trucks carrying economic and cultural benefits to the most remote dwellings. The life of the mountaineers is already more prosperous and cultured.

Finally, the mountain roads, built through the most picturesque regions of our country, make these regions easily accessible to all lovers of natural beauty. They lead to the moving panoramas of our beautiful fatherland.

The construction of mountain roads, undertaken by the "Gorstroi" State Economic Enterprise and its subsidiaries throughout the country, will continue in the future, so that not one corner of our mountains will be without a road.

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